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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2011

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IDNR Announces Results of Chicago Area Bait Shops Inspections for Asian Carp *No Silver or Bighead carp eDNA detected*

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced results of eDNA sampling at 52 bait shops in nine northeast Illinois counties – sampling that is part of the effort to stop the spread of Asian carp. The sampling, which took place last February and March and again this past summer, included visual bait tank inspections and testing of 2-liter water samples that were taken.

“This Bait Shop Survey is another component of a sophisticated and effective multilevel strategy of monitoring and removal that IDNR is undertaking in this fight to prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller.

The water samples were transferred to the University of Notre Dame, where they were filtered and analyzed for the presence of bighead and silver carp DNA. No Asian carp were observed during the bait shop visits and no bighead or silver carp DNA were found in the samples. A questionnaire filled out by bait shop owners or employees during the summer survey indicated minnows were purchased from local wholesalers and not captured from the wild.

“We appreciate the efforts of bait shop owners to work with us on this inspection effort. Their cooperation helps us achieve the overall goal of preventing the spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes,” said IDNR Assistant Director John Rogner.

Surveys to assess the bait trade as a potential pathway for Asian carp to gain access to Chicago waterways and Lake Michigan will continue during the summer of 2011. Surveillance likely will include additional visits to area bait shop and local minnow suppliers.

Support for this surveillance effort was provided to the University of Notre Dame and the IDNR through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Bait shop sampling is part of the 2010 and 2011 Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework, a multi-agency effort to keep Asian carp from developing self-sustaining populations in the Great Lakes.